



Utah Department of Health

Public Health Working to Save Lives by Understanding Men

A general assumption in public health is that it is hard to get men to be proactive about their personal health. Getting men to see a doctor? Even harder. But a recent survey conducted by the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) shows that men do pay a surprising amount of attention to information about their health.

The survey revealed some interesting figures regarding men and healthcare visits. It also showed that eight out of ten men have seen a doctor in the past year. Two out of three had a regular health care provider. In addition, more than half had seen their health care provider for a routine checkup in the last year. This is great news since men face some unique health issues and need to know how to live longer, healthier lives.

As part of the survey, the UDOH interviewed more than 400 men over the age of 45 about their health care, the media they pay attention to, and their trust of health information from a variety of sources. Knowing where men go for health information is critical in order to plan and successfully deliver health messages targeted to men.

Take for example, the UDOH and the Utah Cancer Action Network's (UCAN) new media campaign that educates men about prostate cancer. The UDOH used the survey information to help plan a prostate cancer awareness campaign that began in May 2005. While most campaigns regarding men's health tend to focus on educating women to urge the men in their lives to seek screening or treatment, this campaign is different, it is specifically designed for a male audience.

The campaign encourages men to get preventive checkups, which can save lives. The American Cancer Society estimates that one out of six men will get prostate cancer and that the disease will kill 232,090 men in the U.S. (1,150 Utahns) this year alone. Prostate cancer is the second leading cause of cancer-related death for men in Utah.

There is no known way to prevent prostate cancer, although medical experts agree that not smoking, having a healthy diet, staying physically active, and seeing a health care provider regularly helps



with overall health. The key to reducing prostate cancer deaths is early detection. The UDOH and UCAN want men to talk to their health care provider about which prostate test is right for them—the Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) blood test and/or a Digital Rectal Exam (DRE).

Men will be surveyed again this month and if you are called, we hope that you will participate in the survey. Questions will be added to the survey about the campaign. Men will be asked about any action they took after seeing advertisements, such as talking to their health care provider about prostate cancer screening. Information gathered from the June survey will be used to develop additional preventive health messages and save hundreds of lives.

Cancer Screening Guidelines for Men

20 to 39 – every 3 years

- Exam for cancer of the thyroid, mouth & throat, skin, lymph nodes and testes

40 to 44 – every year

- Exam for cancer of the thyroid, mouth & throat, skin, lymph nodes and testes
- Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) and Digital Rectal Exam (DRE) should be discussed with healthcare provider

50 years and older

- Exam for cancer of the thyroid, mouth & throat, skin, lymph nodes and testes every year
- PSA and DRE should be discussed with healthcare provider every year
- Colon
 - ▶ Fecal Occult Blood Test (FOBT) every year or
 - ▶ Sigmoidoscopy every 5 years or
 - ▶ Yearly FOBT plus flexible Sigmoidoscopy every 5 years or
 - ▶ Double-contrast barium enema every 5 years or
 - ▶ Colonoscopy every 10 years

Source: American Cancer Society 